

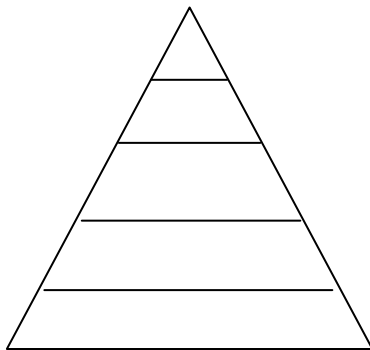
Top Tips

Motivation

What is motivation?

Motivation is not about making a person do something against their will, but making them want to do it voluntarily. The dictionary defines motivation as 'providing an incentive', but what is an incentive? We all have different motivators – things that make us tick – and different incentives satisfy these, but they will change depending on our circumstances both inside and outside work.

One way of looking at it – Maslow's theory - shows this as a pyramid:



Self-fulfilment - the need to feel fulfilled and to achieve

Respect - the need for self-respect and the respect of others

Relationships - the need for social and business relationships

Safety and security - the need to feel safe and secure

Physical - the need for food, shelter, warmth, and relief from pain

It is shown in this way as the key point is that each layer must be complete before attempting to tackle the ones above it. Once one level of need is satisfied, people will begin to work towards satisfying the next level. Similarly, if circumstances change, a person will give priority towards satisfying the lowest level that they believe to be incomplete.

It has also been suggested that the lower levels are factors which do not in themselves motivate people, but their absence will de-motivate people, and therefore only the upper layers are true positive motivators.

So what does this mean for you as a manager? The two key messages are:

Find out what's in your team's pyramids

A sales person who hates flying is unlikely to be motivated by a chance to win a holiday abroad, as this would not represent relief from (mental or physical) pain. However, a person who loves foreign travel is more likely to find this an incentive.

Find out where they are in their pyramid

The same holiday would be no incentive to a person whose job is under threat - and therefore possibly their mortgage repayments or rent, and therefore their home, as the bottom layers in their pyramid are incomplete, and a holiday like this is likely to fit in the top level. Similarly, a chance to have their mortgage paid off would be no incentive to a couple who have no mortgage, and who are near the top of their pyramid.

Motivators

What can you use to motivate your team? There is a very common misconception amongst a lot of people and organisations that money is the prime motivator for

most people. This is **NOT** true, although money is a motivator for some people. In addition, not all the likely options cost money; consider instead alternatives which are low- or no-cost, such as:

- Simply saying 'Thank You' or 'Well Done' – this is free!
- Praising a person for a job done well – again, this is free
- Recognising the person's contribution in front of the team – still free!
- Allowing someone to have some flexibility in their working day occasionally
- Wider-ranging duties
- Added responsibility

And so on.....

Not all of these apply in any given situation; it is to serve as a guide.

Time v effect

Consider also how long you want this to last; will it be a short intense burst of extra effort or a sustained growth over time. For example, the effect of money as an incentive for some people can be powerful but very short-lived, whereas extra responsibility is much slower to take effect but is sustained over a much longer term.

De-motivators

It is also worth looking to see if there are any de-motivating factors that you could remove at little or no cost. These might include:

- ✎ Lack of recognition – how would you feel if no-one ever said 'Thank You' or 'Well Done' to you?
- ✎ Poor team facilities – would a coat of paint or a new kettle help?
- ✎ Untidy areas – what does this say about how much we care for our people?
- ✎ Lack of information or training – do the team know what's going on?
- ✎ Rigid duties and over-direction – could you empower your team more?

And so on.....

Look at your team and your department/business and think what you could do!

For related topics see Top Tips:

- ➔ **Empowerment**
- ➔ **Leadership**
- ➔ **Development Methods**